

VZCZCXRO9420
RR RUEHROV
DE RUEHKH #0572 0651508
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 061508Z MAR 06
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1749
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC 0039

C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 000572

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/06/2016
TAGS: [MOPS](#) [MASS](#) [PGOV](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: MOD RESTRUCTURES; FIRES 400, HIRES 600

Classified By: Political Officer Ron Capps for reason 1.4 b and d.

Summary

¶1. (C) The Ministry of Defense has undergone a re-structuring and a blood-letting of 400 serving officers. Almost simultaneously, 600 officers from the South Sudan Defense Forces will be integrated into the Sudanese Armed Forces. Retired officers say that those officers who have been cashiered are all considered to be threats to President Bashir. End Summary.

Restructuring

¶2. (C) In an attempt to "raise the level of the military to that of a world class force," and to "upgrade the combat and defense capabilities of the armed forces to protect the borders against external threats," Minister of Defense Abdul Rahim Mohammed Hussein announced on February 28 the immediate restructuring of the Sudanese Armed Forces. Hussein announced the creation of chief of staff positions for the SAF's three main branches: infantry, air forces, and mechanized forces. While all three generals will be called Chief of Staff, the infantry chief of staff will be the senior of the three. Hussein also announced his promotion from lieutenant general to general; a grade one step below that of field marshal (the rank held by President Bashir), he noted.

Blood-Letting

¶3. (C) On Thursday afternoon, March 1, just before the troops were released for the Friday holiday, the Ministry of Defense announced the retirement of 400 serving officers ranging in rank from lieutenant colonel to lieutenant general. These retirements were not done by "batches" (year groups), as is the norm in Sudan. According to retired officers, all the officers released presented some type of threat to either the security of the regime or directly to President Bashir.

¶4. (C) One contact said the cashiered officers came from three groups: (1) those from West Sudan - Darfur and Kordofan; (2) those from Nuba mountains; and (3) those who had some connection to Vice President Ali Osman Taha. The cuts were described by another retired officer, a former brigadier general, as the first cuts to Taha's tribe, the Shaygia. He said he knew of no officers from Bashir's tribe, the Ja'aleen, who had been cashiered.

New Blood

¶5. (C) Almost simultaneously, the army announced the integration of 400 officers formerly with the South Sudan Defense Forces (SSDF), ranging in rank from captain to major general. These officers will be sworn in on Thursday March ¶9. Another 200 are due to integrate the following week.

Comment

¶6. (C) The blood-letting is seen as a protective move by Bashir. The retired officers we speak to say that Bashir clearly fears a coup d'etat attempt by Taha. The restructuring can be seen in the same light: dissipating power atop the military makes it unlikely that one officer could lead the entire army against the President. The SSDF officers are a wild card, but we expect that Bashir has won their loyalty by integrating them at relatively high ranks given their lack of professional training.
WHITEHEAD